



PAT MCCRORY
GOVERNOR

STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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B. W. COLLIER
DIRECTOR

March 22, 2016

Members of the House Select Committee on Step Therapy
Attn: Rep. David Lewis, Chairman
Attn: Rep. Josh Dobson, Vice Chairman
16 W. Jones St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Chairman Lewis,

In response to a call for input regarding the importance of Opioid Abuse Prevention and the use of opioids with abuse-deterrent properties (OADPs), the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) would offer the following:

One of the most compelling examples of the significance of OADPs is the reformulation of OxyContin and its effect on the misuse and/or abuse of same. As an investigator with the SBI in our Diversion and Environmental Crimes Unit, I personally have seen a dramatic decrease in the diversion, misuse and abuse of OxyContin after the reformulation of the medication, especially once the generic form that had no tamper resistant measure was taken off the market. Since 2010 our agency has seen a remarkable decrease in the diversion and seizure of OxyContin products involving street sales. There were no seizures by the SBI in 2014, 2015 or to date in 2016. When involved in undercover purchases of pharmaceutical controlled substances, you cannot give OxyContin away. Abusers and addicts do not want it due to the reformulation and their inability to design a measure to defeat the tamper resistant mechanism.

In checking our Controlled Substance Reporting System or Prescription Database Management System prescribing of all milligram strengths of OxyContin have remained steady with a slight increase since 2010. In 2014 there were 212,730 prescriptions for OxyContin filled in North Carolina with a total dosage unit amount of 14, 668,936 dispensed. While there are more prescriptions than ever prescribed and filled for OxyContin in North Carolina we are not seeing it diverted as before the reformation of OxyContin. There was a significant diversion issue with OxyContin in the late 1990s and early 2000s due to the lack of tamper resistant mechanism in the medication.

With the removal of the generic formulations of OxyContin from the market once the medication was reformulated we have seen continuous declines in the diversion of OxyContin in North Carolina. Sadly, this drug has been replaced with Oxymorphone generic formulations that do not have a tamper resistant mechanism. Even with brand name Opana, even though it has a tamper resistant formulation, we are seeing diversion because addicts and abusers are "chewing it like bubblegum" to defeat the tamper resistant feature.

In conclusion, the reformulation of OxyContin with the tamper resistant feature has had a dramatic impact on the diversion of OxyContin in North Carolina. Hopefully as new pain medications come into the market pharmaceutical manufacturers will follow the lead of Purdue Pharma to formulate controlled substances that have a high potential for abuse with a mechanism that defeats the attempts to alter the medication in such a way that time delayed dosing cannot be modified.

Thank you for your time in considering this matter.

Best regards,

Judy S. Billings
Special Agent in Charge
North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation
Diversion and Environmental Crimes Unit